

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1 and 6-13 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 12 and 13 as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 12. Also, claim 8 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 12. In addition, claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form including most of the limitations of claim 1 except for the final line of claim 1. In view of this, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 8 and 12 are allowable since they include the limitations indicated as being allowable by the Examiner. Dependent claims 6, 7, 9-11 and 13 are likewise allowable.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. By way of the present amendment, this claim has been cancelled rendering this rejection moot.

Claim Objections

Claim 4 stands objected to as being in improper dependent form. By way of the present amendment, Applicants have cancelled claim 4 rendering this objection moot.

Claim 13 is objected to for using the plural of "line" in line 2. By way of the present amendment, this has now been corrected. Accordingly, this objection is also overcome.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 6, 7 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Europe '464 (EP 943464) in view of Japan '709 (JP 3-3104709) and optionally Japan '202 (JP 2-212202) and/or Tsuda (US 4,962,801). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

First, it is noted that the Examiner has not included claim 8 in the statement of his rejection, but has included this claim in the explanation of the rejection. Accordingly, it is assumed that claim 8 has been included in this rejection.

Secondly, Applicants submit that claims 1, 8 and 12 are allowable based on the additional language added which the Examiner previously indicated as being allowable.

Applicants furthermore understand that the Examiner's use of the two optional references is meant to be other possible secondary references which could be combined with primary reference Europe '464. The following discussion is based on this understanding.

The Examiner relies on the Europe '464 reference to show a tire with an asymmetric tread having lateral grooves and connecting grooves, both inside and outside in a range of angles. The Examiner also points out that the angle $\theta 4$ is larger than the angle $\theta 6$ on the inside connecting groove. However, this reference does not show that the 4 angles $\theta 1$ - $\theta 4$ from the outside tread edge decrease toward the inside. Also, the Examiner admits that the primary reference does not show that the differences between adjoining outside connecting groove angles are not less than 5°.

The Examiner relies on Japan '709 or alternatively Japan '202 or Tsuda to show that the inclination of the connecting grooves from the outside tread to the inside tread decreases. In regard to Japan '709, Applicants disagree that connecting grooves of any kind are shown. The blocks are formed by the intersections between outside lateral grooves and inside lateral grooves. There are no outside connecting grooves and clearly no angles θ_1 - θ_4 for such connecting grooves. In regard to Japan '202 and Tsuda, while these angles are shown to decrease from an outside edge, there is no showing of an inclination angle θ_6 on the inside edge which is less than θ_4 . Accordingly, Applicants submit that no combination of Europe '464 with any of the other three references shows the claimed relationship of the decreasing angle size between θ_1 , θ_2 , θ_3 , θ_4 and θ_6 . For this reason, Applicants submit that both claims 1 and 8 are allowable.

Furthermore, claims 1 and 8 include the limitation that the angle differences between θ_1 and θ_2 , between θ_2 and θ_3 , and between θ_3 and θ_4 are not less than 5°. This specific size limitation of the angle differences is not seen in any of the references and is not obvious. Furthermore, despite the lengthy explanation given by the Examiner in the references, there is no allegation or explanation of this limitation being shown by the references nor is there even any statement that this would be obvious. If the Examiner persists in this rejection, he is requested to explain where this limitation is found or explain why the limitation would be obvious and what motivation would be present for the angle differences to be of this size. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1 and 8 are additionally allowable.

Claims 6, 7, 11 depend from allowable claim 1 and claims 9 and 10 depend from allowable claim 8. As such, these claims are considered to be additionally allowable. In

addition, these claims recite other features of the invention to make them additionally allowable.

Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Europe '464 in view of Japan '709 and optionally Japan '202 or Tsuda as discussed above and further in view of German '829 (DE 3815829). The Examiner cited the German reference to show tires having an asymmetric tread so that the lateral grooves are inclined in the same direction or opposite direction. Even if this reference does teach this feature, it still does not aid the other references in overcoming their deficiencies as noted above. Accordingly, these claims are considered to be additionally allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

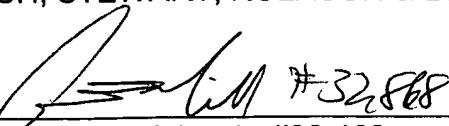
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$950.00 is attached hereto.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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